

United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Siskiyou National Forest
Two Rivers Zone
26568 Redwood Highway
Cave Junction, OR 97523

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Medford District
Grants Pass Resource Area
3040 Biddle Road
Medford, OR 97504

File Codes:FS: 1920 Planning
BLM: 1792 (Upper Illinois)

Dear Interested Citizen:

Thank you for your continued interest in the joint Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Forest Service (FS) Upper Illinois Landscape Management Project. Our project planning work and environmental impact statement preparation has taken longer than we originally anticipated. We thought an update of the project might be of interest to you.

Some of the delay is due to our decision to jointly prepare Version 2.0 of the East Fork Illinois River Watershed Analysis. Watershed analysis, an important part of the Northwest Forest Plan's Aquatic Conservation Strategy, addresses biological processes, describes potential management opportunities, and helps set priorities for resource management, and restoration and maintenance of ecological functions. The Watershed Analysis is available on the Internet at www.fs.fed.us/r6/siskiyou or we would be happy to send you a copy upon request.

Back in 1999, the FS and BLM initiated scoping on the Upper Illinois project. We received about 300 scoping responses. From these public comments and issues identified by our interdisciplinary planning teams, seven major issue areas were identified. Our project design and analysis will consider these issues.

- **Fire Risk and Hazard** (e.g., high stand densities, long history of fire suppression, the high fire hazard and risk, risks of prescribed fire)
- **Quality of Life / Amenity Values** (e.g., proximity of rural residences to the project area, great importance of forests to the local residents, current and potential recreation uses)
- **Water Resources** (e.g., the condition of and effects on water quality, water quantity and riparian areas, relationship of road conditions to water quality)
- **Vegetation Condition and Species / Habitats of Concern** (e.g., late-successional and old growth forests and habitats, unique vegetation types and botanical conditions, declining extent of some habitat types, exceptionally high forest stand densities)
- **Fisheries and Habitat** (e.g., condition of fish habitat)
- **Cultural and historical Resources** (e.g., exceptional historical and cultural features in the project area)
- **Economic** (e.g., the appropriateness of commercial logging, the importance of economically viable projects)

The scoping comments we received were primarily related to proposals within the East Fork Watershed. In light of this, and in an effort to focus the EIS, we decided to split the project planning and analysis into two parts. The Forest Service and the BLM will focus the Upper Illinois Landscape Management Project's EIS on federal lands in the East Fork watershed. BLM proposed projects in the West Fork of the Illinois watershed will be analyzed by the BLM in a separate environmental assessment (EA). The purpose of both projects is to implement the Northwest Forest Plan, the Siskiyou National Forest's Land and Resource Management Plan and the Medford BLM's Resource Management Plan.

The Upper Illinois Project's Draft EIS is currently scheduled for release summer 2001. Each agency expects to issue one or more Records of Decision once the NEPA process is complete. Completion of the EA for the West Fork project is also anticipated for the summer 2001. For more information, please feel free to contact one of us or Rochelle Desser (FS Team Leader, 541-592-4055) or Doug Parker (BLM Team Coach, 541-618-2388).

Sincerely,

Field Manager
Grants Pass Resource Area

District Ranger
Two Rivers Zone